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Movement

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by

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FOREWORD

The substance of this booklet was presented in two papers read before an open meeting of the Rural Life Committee of the Connecticut Conference of Congregational Christian Churches at Kent on April 16th, 1945. The immediate reaction of Dr. Hypes' audience was that his words should have a wider circulation: hence this pamphlet.

Professor Hypes speaks as a loyal and devoted Christian layman, as one who was a pioneer in America's Country Life movement, and as one who while head of the University of Connecticut's Sociology Department has directed detailed research in several of the state's communities where the process of suburbanization has been especially marked.

It is high time that Connecticut's town and country churches, so long discouraged by emigrating populations, dwindling agriculture, and disappearing small industries cast off their habits of minimum thought, leadership, and program and rise to meet the challenge of a new community .

Loring D. Chase, Chairman
Rural Life Committee of the
Connecticut Conference of
Congregational Christian Churches.

The cover illustration is the Saugatuck Congregational Church of Westport, Connecticut

THE CHALLENGE OF CONNECTICUT'S SUBURBAN MOVEMENT

by

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INTRODUCTION

Those who are well-acquainted with the southern New England scene are impressed with the great degree of urban influence throughout the area. One form of this urban influence is suburbanization, or "rurbanization," as some sociologists call it.

In studying the suburbanization movement with respect to its implications for the work of the church, or other social agencies, we need not take a long journey into history. Suffice it to say, there has been a general tendency throughout the country for populations to become concentrated in a ring surrounding the larger cities. And research shows that though suburban populations come chiefly from the city, they consist also of original elements in the area and other elements drawn from the open country.

Because of such diverse geographical and cultural origins, the suburban community is in danger of becoming a helter-skelter, unplanned aggregation of people. And if the suburban movement is rapid, it is apt to overtax the public utilities and the institutions of the area. Furthermore, because of the rapid increase of land values, the agriculture formerly existent on the outer periphery of such suburban areas usually becomes decadent, and the general physical aspects of the locality often become non-descript, sometimes bordering upon slum conditions. Some students of social ecology call this the "rotten ring" around the city. Thus the suburban movement becomes a timely subject for scientific study and social planning.

ECOLOGY OF SUBURBIA

Some research has been done on suburbanization. From such studies we know that suburbia occupies a unique socio-cultural as well as unique socio-geographical position relating to the city proper and the countryside beyond.

In an ecological study of Chicago by the Sociology Department of the University of Chicago, some years ago, it was found that in the center of the city, in the midst of the most intensive business area where land values were the highest, there were no families. Outside this non-family area was an area of slightly lower land values, with many small shops in basements and serious overcrowding in housing. In this slum area were found many immigrant families, usually living in strict ethnic groups. Outside of this slum area was a wide circle called the "rooming house" area or, facetiously, the "bright light district," or the "land of anonymity." This area formerly contained the residences of many wealthy persons; but with the growth of the city the population moved constantly toward the periphery, and it yet so moves. This area of anonymity is now occupied by apartment dwellers or roomers who, if they pay their bills and keep out of the clutches of the police, are often not questioned as to their correct names, their occupations, or their moral status. A good many people of the underworld find their hideaway in this area. Outside of the rooming house area lies a relatively new residential area. Upon the Lake Michigan front, this area contains wealthy residential hotels; elsewhere, high-type residential apartment houses and separate dwellings. Zorbaugh facetiously terms this the "Gold Coast." Still farther out is an area that we might call "suburbia." Edna Ferber in her book, *So Big*, tells something of the agricultural life of the Dutch element in this suburbia of Chicago. A special phase of suburbanization in the Chicago area is the development of a number of residential suburbs. Some of these are fairly high-class and exclusive, while farther out some, of course, are of the "rotten ring" type. Thus, we find an ecological arrangement of the entire city and its suburbs based largely on land values. Probably any city of a million population or larger would show a similar ecology. Where land values are very high, we will not find residences; but when land values are somewhat lower we will find slum residences. And if we go still farther out, we will find rooming house and small shop areas; still farther out better residential areas; and still farther on, suburbia. Of course these "circles" are only schematic representations. The areas actually may be far from the regularity of a circle.

In Connecticut, the suburban movement is shown most graphically about the cities of Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. (Figure 1). Immediately prior to World War II, the growth of these cities was relatively small, but towns surrounding them often doubled in ten years' time. And the general configuration of the area of rapid growth in Connecticut is that of the capital "L," with one arm lying in the Connecticut River valley, and the other along Long Island Sound toward New York. As a result of this movement the population of the state is most dense in the Connecticut River valley and Long Island Sound areas, and least dense in the western and the eastern highland areas. Yet the general orientation of a given suburb to a city the size of Hartford would probably be characteristic, in many ways, of that of the suburbs of a larger city.

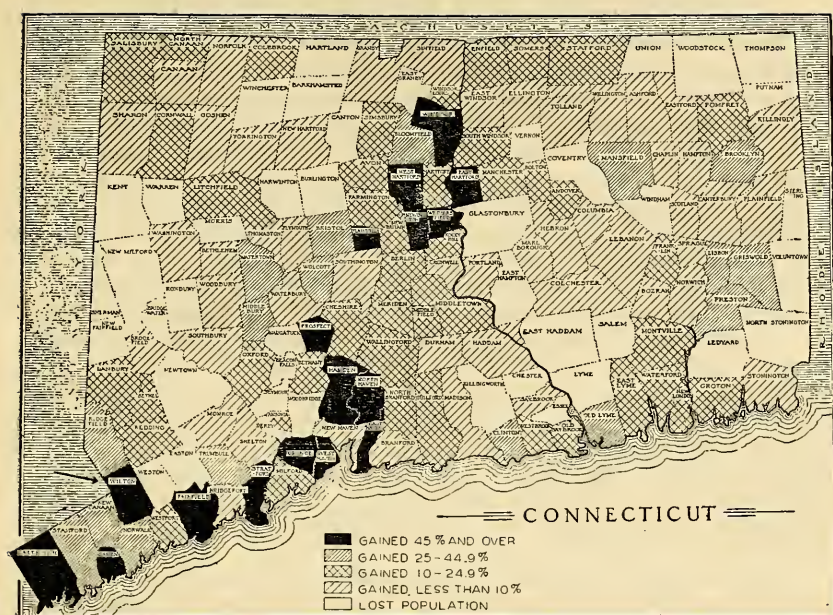


Figure 1: Population changes in Connecticut towns, 1920-1930. Data taken from the U. S. Census of 1930. Note the towns showing the largest increases are situated near the larger cities.

As previously stated, such ecology is based largely on land values. Upon such values, we could classify the farming on the outer perimeter of the city back to its remote hinterlands. Within the more concentrated suburbia, we would find green-house farming and small backyard garden plots. Farther out where land values are yet high, we would find vegetable growing and, possibly, a limited amount of dairying, or at least types of farming that can be intensified profitably on highpriced land. Still farther out, we would find general farming characteristic of the larger area. Thus, we would find a distribution of types of farming on a gradient of land values from the most intensive commercial type on the small areas of high-priced land to the least intensive ranching or grazing where land values are very low.

It is probable that within this general framework of ecology we could find also a distribution of social institutions as to size, wealth, elegance of appointments, form and variety of programs, quality of clientele, leadership, and all the rest. At least, one would expect marked differences between a fashionable church on Fifth Avenue or Morningside Drive and a mission in the Boverie, or a lonely little chapel at a rural cross-roads.

THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND SITUATION

The Decentralization of Business: One of the somewhat specialized aspects of suburbanization in southern New England is the decentralization of businesses, especially the textile and certain other industries that have long existed in the small villages and towns in the rural areas. The citizens of colonial New England tended to group themselves into villages. They would start up a tannery, a gristmill or similar business which could furnish employment full-time or part-time for a few families of the locality, while, at the same time, some members of these families would carry on a certain amount of agriculture. With the inauguration of the textile business, the same dispersion continued. This wide-spread tendency toward the dispersion of small non-agricultural businesses into the rural areas, as historically developed and illustrated here in southern New England, is receiving much attention today from men like Borsodi and Ford. Its potential value in producing economic and civic security is great, for we note that many small villages here in southern New England have combined agricultural and non-agricultural businesses so as to obtain an economic support and a permanency of residence that many other sections of the United States do not enjoy.

But, you may ask whether this picture that we have drawn is one of suburbanization. Obviously it cannot be called either urban or rural in the strict sense of these terms. It has an agricultural and open-country or rural village setting, and it also contains many people of urban origin and urban employment.

Rural Commutation: The dispersion of non-farm business, combined with an excellent system of improved roads, has extended the urban influences still farther in southern New England. But a special angle of this influence is the commuting of rural dwellers to employment in the city proper. Even if some businesses have become centralized, the residences of the workers, to an extent, have also become decentralized, due to the expansion of modern means of transportation. In fact, we have been impressed by the large number of our rural population who are regularly employed in the city. In one rural town in western Connecticut, we found that about half of the citizens who were gainfully employed were employed outside of that town and commuted to work, and three out of five of these commuters worked in New York City. But even in more strictly rural towns we can find the urban influence well-defined. For example, in one of the most rural towns of eastern Connecticut we found that 80 per cent of the families had at one time or another lived in the city. And many of these families had sons and daughters working in the big city and so kept a vital connection with the urban areas, — their markets, kinship and ethnic groups, recreation, and other attractions.

A more specialized aspect of the commuting movement in southern New England is the professional and businessmen from the city who are moving out into these rural areas for residence and recreation (Figure 2). The lakes, rough hillsides and other characteristics that make much of the land unsuited to farming draw city men of

wealth and learning who seek a suitable place for bringing up their families and for getting away from the tensions of the big city. Thus, almost every rural town in the state has among its residents one or more authors, artists, bankers, lawyers, musicians or others who may be listed in *Who's Who in America* and who are known professionally far and wide.

Multiplicity of Ethnic Stocks: Another specialized aspect of the urban influence in rural southern New England is that people gathered originally from almost every corner of the globe now live here. Immigrants from almost every civilized land now dwell in rural southern New England, coming here, in most cases, by way of the large cities. This brings a heterogeneity of cultural interests and intellectual outlook into these rural areas that make them unique.

Such an array of national origins and vocational and professional interests in our rural areas presents a growing potentiality for the creation of a high social order. Students of society have long noted that multiplicity of interests and diversity of racial stocks result in a more versatile and a more creative social order than do less diverse societies. On the other hand, if *laissez-faire* is allowed to have full sway, the situation may become characterized by serious social problems, if not social decadence. The challenge, of course, is for research and common observation to discover these potential values, and for agencies designed to carry on social organization and social welfare to organize and coordinate these values into a well-regulated social order that is conscious of its power and is ever moving toward higher attainments.

WHY IS THERE A SUBURBIA?

Interdependence of the Open Country and the City: Thus far, we have given some hints why people collect in the hinterland of our great cities. If you asked the average country dweller what he considers the ideal location for residence and business he would probably picture a sort of suburbia. He might say that he would like to live in the open country for the sake of his family, yet be within "striking" distance of the big city for the sake of its markets, medical service and higher educational institutions. With the multiplication of hard roads and automobiles, suburbia of this sort may be removed rather far from the corporate limits of cities and still be suburbia.

But in southern New England, traditionally and historically, a vast proportion of the rural population is dependent upon non-farm industries for maintenance. In 1930 the non-farm rural population of Connecticut was several times larger than the farm population, and three-fifths or more of the farmers of Connecticut were only part-time farmers. And throughout the whole United States, the rural non-farm population is rapidly becoming as large as the farm population. These non-farm people find the open country fit and attractive for other things than extractive farming; and all will agree that good homes and good recreational facilities are worthy uses of

the natural resources. As a compensation, the city furnishes its suburbs and rural hinterland with markets, recreational and educational facilities, and expert professional service. One of the net results of these interrelationships is the multiplication of the intellectual and vocational interests of the people of suburbia and the open country, which should result in creating in them a higher social order.

The Industrial Revolution: The student of economic history will find in the Industrial Revolution a strong impetus to suburban dwelling. When industry was largely of the hand and small-shop sort, entire families were employed in these industries and lived near the industry or carried on a certain amount of industrial activity at home. With the inauguration of labor-saving machinery and the centralization of manufacturing in certain larger localities, for the sake of efficiency, industry began to be taken away from small communities and the sweat shop conditions of the home. However, in southern New England, such concentration of industries was only partial; many rural towns still have a textile mill, or are within easy commuting distance of a mill by automobile.

But the centralization of industry has made inroads upon our rural towns. To continue connection with the larger industries, families tended to move from small villages and rural areas into the larger centers. So we find a certain decline in village life and in farming. Goldsmith, the poet of rustic English life of the 18th Century (1728-1774), pictured this movement in the England of his day, in his *The Deserted Village*, when he wrote;

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."

And the late Theodore Roosevelt, sensing the same movement in America, and being disturbed by it, appointed the famous Country Life Commission which made a study of rural and village conditions in this country and brought out a report about 1911. The report of this Commission is still interesting, partly for its historical values, and partly because it describes social movements that are yet in process.

It has been said that so long as there was a frontier in America there was an outlet for the landless and for others who did not wish to settle down in their native habitat. But now there is very little good farm land available to settlers outside of Alaska. So those who would farm must canvass more critically the economic possibilities of their present localities. In making such vocational decisions many have turned to the city or to suburbia for employment.

Concomitant with this situation is a trend toward large-unit farming, especially in the grazing and small grain areas. The extensive use of labor-saving machines in farming has brought about a phenomenal growth not only in large-unit farming but also in the amount of cash required to enter and to operate a farming business. This makes farming increasingly difficult to enter. Urban employ-

ment, or part-time farming, seem to be promising alternatives to full-time commercial farming. Those who are planning to assist the returning G. I.'s from the present world war are discovering this fact. This situation leads us then to examine the alternatives in land use that may be followed.

ALTERNATIVES IN LAND USE

Retreat to the City: We know that modern farming is becoming highly commercialized and specialized, and the opportunity for individual ownership of farming businesses is becoming more nearly impossible. In other words, we recognize that it takes a man of good business capacity, with specialized training, and with considerable capital to get seasonably into possession of a farming business of any consequence and run it successfully. There are two observable consequences to this situation: First, the creation of a rural wage-earning class employed on commercial farms, or as care-takers of estates; second, the driving of disadvantaged country people to the city. A specialized aspect of farm wage earning is the employment during war times of imported foreign labor and the establishment of youth work camps. And a significant consequence of cityward migrations, at least according to the ideas of some thinkers, is that the city gains two widely dissimilar elements from the open country: the aggressive wide-awake young people who seek education or other opportunities which the country does not provide, and a poverty-stricken element who move to the city to engage in unskilled labor and to receive the ministrations of social agencies designed to help unfortunate people.

Recreational Use of Land: But going to the city is only one alternative in land use, or non-use. Recreation is a most wide-spread use of land in suburban New England. We have already mentioned that a vast number of the so-called farmers of Connecticut are part-time farmers, many of whom are farming as an avocation. But much of the land in the state is used purely or primarily for recreational activities. Summer camps, summer hotels, riding academies, hunting and fishing lands, golf courses, state parks and forests, summer homes, etc., make use of lands estimated at least an eighth of the entire area of Connecticut. If we should add to this land set aside entirely or primarily for permanent rural residence, the percentage devoted to non-farm use would mount very materially. Such non-farm use of land will probably increase in response to the suburbanization movement. Such non-farm use of land has made New England the summer playground of the nation, and has brought much employment to rural dwellers.

Problems and Opportunities: This rather complex picture emphasizes the interdependence of urban and rural life, whether or not the two meet at a particular spot that we can call suburbia. It also indicates the dynamic spirit of our population, and calls into question the necessity for the equalization of educational and other opportunities between urban and rural areas, and for a certain amount of social planning to make these movements of the population those

of voluntary adjustment to a better way of life rather than the adjustment of compulsion toward degradation. Of one thing we may be sure: so long as aggressiveness characterizes our people, so long as free enterprise has opportunity, and so long as science is not throttled, our America — urban, suburban, rural — will offer almost unlimited possibilities for the creation of the goods and the situations that are needed for a high social order. The chief problem is to provide the education, organization and administration, that are needed to guide and preserve our traditional ideas of the unique worth of the individual in a democratic social order.

NEW GOALS IN SUBURBANIZATION

The Goodly Heritage: In view of what we have thus said, it would appear that we are arriving at new mileposts in the suburban movement. Perhaps we are arriving at new goal-posts, as well, for the suburban movement is giving us new things of value to work for and live for. We have few, if any, rural areas of simple open-country agricultural self-sufficiency; it is probable that we never had such areas in southern New England. But we do have suburban areas with populations of mixed national origins. We do have a sort of open-country suburbs, as well as urban suburbs. And regardless of the density of population, we have a population with many and varied vocational interests and attainments, and with a multiplicity of cultural attributes. This would seem to be the proper setting for an ideal social order.

Most of these southern New England rural communities are near enough to the great urban centers to take advantage of their markets, recreational institutions, educational institutions, and institutions dispensing medical service and other forms of social welfare. The automobile and the hard road make such advantages possible. At the same time, these "rural" dwellers have certain advantages of small-unit farming, nature study, fresh air, and room for growing children that the city does not usually provide. In fact, this suburban picture seems alluring, indeed. But the situation is not entirely free of problems, as we shall show in some detail later. There remains for our suburbias the problem of making a true and correct evaluation of their goodly heritage. The average individual in suburbia is apt to see other fields as greener than his own, and to look with contempt upon local situations that have high possibilities for individual attainment and happiness, if these situations are but understood and wisely used. Providing such an understanding is a worthy goal for the church, the school and other social institutions in our suburban areas.

Meeting the Issue: It is probable that with the advance of science in farming, industry and business generally, and with the progress of education in all fields, the average individual of temperate habits can live effectively on the labor of a short work-week. If so, what shall he do with his extra time? Meeting that question, creatively and fully, is a special challenge to the social leadership of

our suburbias, for suburbia will prove to be the promised land of opportunity and pleasant living toward which an increasing proportion of our population will gravitate. We must remember the truthfulness of the old aphorism that an "idle hand is the devil's workshop." Among other things that implies the need of special education for a wise use of such leisure. Our education too often has been designed for making a living rather than for living a rich and satisfying life. Thus the various institutions that are professedly devoted to the things of the spirit and the mind will need to "read the signs of the times," that we have described, and to question what worthwhile programs, wise management, and expert leadership they have to offer our suburbias in their effort to lead a satisfying and full existence.

Obviously setting such goals for more gracious and more intelligent living in our suburbias is also setting new goals for the reorganization of social institutions and social programs for a more vital service. If institutions such as the church and the school are not willing and prepared to strive creatively for vital leadership in our suburbias of the future, they will be doomed to a marginal sort of existence. The scales need to be taken from our eyes, as institutions and as institutional workers, so that we may see the vast opportunities that lie before us.

PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM SUBURBANIZATION

The discerning student of suburbanization in southern New England will note many problems emerging from the movement. Many of these problems, no doubt, will have an important post-war significance. But without stopping at this time to describe the determinative factors and forces that bring suburbanization into being, we may proceed at once to the description of certain trends or situations to which social agencies might well address themselves.

One of these problems, a proper evaluation of the goodly heritage potential to most suburbias, has been sufficiently noted, for present purposes, in previous paragraphs. But there are other problems to which we should give specific attention.

1. SHIFTING OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Depopulation of Rural Areas: The suburban movement is sometimes erroneously conceived as merely a movement of urban populations to the periphery of the city. While the major portion of suburban populations probably does come from within the city, a significant portion comes from the countryside.

Where country populations have been drawn upon drastically for a number of years to replenish urban and suburban populations, we often find depopulation in the country. Thus some formerly prosperous small country communities and villages have almost become ghost towns. A study of rural migrations in Connecticut some

years ago indicated that 33 of the 169 towns of the state, chiefly in the eastern and the western highland areas, had lost population during the decade studied, and in some of these towns the loss had been extremely severe (Figure 1). One rural town had only 196 inhabitants!

Such depopulation brings many problems. One is that of keeping up the usual social institutions. For example, if all of the people of the town above mentioned had belonged to but one religious body and had worshipped at the same place, their combined efforts would hardly have supported one minister and his program; but they were split among a number of faiths and denominations which precluded unity of ecclesiastical action. It is probable that the schools of this town were small, and expensive per student. And recreation and other social activities that require human resources would be non-existent. We find here also an example of the rotten borough system. This town in 1930 sent two representatives to the House of Representatives of the General Assembly, the same number as Hartford with a population of 165,000! To state it differently, a voter in this small rural town in 1930 had 837 times the voting power of a citizen of Hartford, so far as the House of Representatives was concerned. Is that sound American democracy?

A Strain on Suburban Institutions: Regardless of the origin of suburban population, when rapid suburbanization takes place we usually find social disorganization and social strain. Of course, if a plan for suburban development has preceded the movement, these difficulties may be obviated, and we have some excellent examples of planned residential communities in our suburbs. But, in many instances, the suburban movement consists of a gradual filling in of the periphery of urban areas with citizens drawn from everywhere, and the settlement is made without definite planning for the convenience, sanitation, or beauty of the area. So often the suburban movement means the movement toward the formation of new slums.

In addition to securing adequate sanitation and public utilities for the locality, there is the problem of the adequacy of social institutions. The existing churches, schools, police force, etc., are probably rural in character — at any rate inadequate for the new suburban population. During the early phases of World War II many small cities and manufacturing villages in southern New England became centers of war industries. The population moving in had difficulty in finding homes; the schools were swamped with students; and the police force was inadequate for safety. And many churches found their church plants, their programs and their official personnel entirely unsuited for rendering vital service to the shapeless, milling mass of humanity suddenly thrown together in a new suburbia in their parishes.

So long as economic prosperity continues, these cramped suburban conditions may be bearable, in a fashion; but when unemployment and its resulting evils accrue, as we may logically expect, now at the end of the war, then our mushroom communities will have the additional burden of poor relief and a general, positive program of

public welfare. Can we expect our suburban institutions, as these have developed throughout the years, to be ready for constructive service? Social understanding, social adjustment in many forms, and the conserving of human values in general will be the challenge laid at the door of every institution that professes to serve mankind.

2. CHANGE IN COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS

This situation then places new emphasis on the functioning of community institutions. Some of our studies of suburbanization in Connecticut indicate clearly a shift in the functioning of the traditional institutions. For instance, many people who move from the city, particularly if they are not of the old American stock, are not very active in political affairs in the suburban rural communities to which they move. As the result, we often find a mere handful of the older native citizens actually running the towns. The need for democratic participation in operative government by migrant citizens is plainly implied.

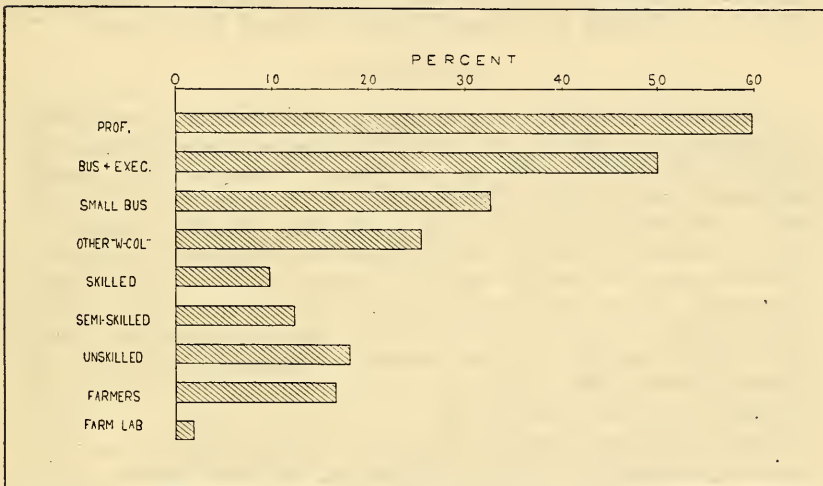


Figure 2: Percent of each occupational group in Wilton moving from New York City.

A variation of the non-participation of migrant citizens in local affairs is seen in the case of some persons who move out to the suburbs while retaining business and professional connections in the city (Figure 2). These folks use the suburbs only for recreation and residence. They come to the countryside not as responsible citizens, but as city people in quest of rest and recreation. On the other hand, we know of pleasing instances of city people who moved to the country and quickly became socially acclimated, and assumed full civic responsibility in their new home communities. Civic life with such friendly interest and cooperation bodes well for the future of such towns.

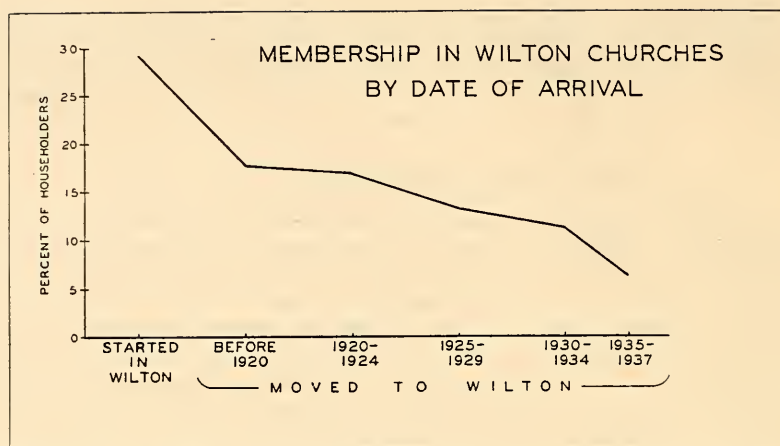


Figure 3: Percent of householders having membership in the local churches of Wilton, by date of arrival in the town.

Suburbia furnishes a new area of special functional interest for the church. In one of our suburban studies, householders were questioned as to their religious preferences. Less than half actually belonged to any church. Of those who did belong five out of eight had not moved their membership to the local churches (Figure 3). And, as noted in Windsor, over a fourteen-year period, the trend is for affiliations with local churches to decrease with succeeding waves of migrants. The reason for this phenomenon, in the absence of further research, can only be conjectured. But the challenge is clear for religious workers to devise approaches and programs which will favorably impress the newcomer so that he will be willing to identify himself with the local church.

The functioning of other suburban institutions has shifted. During the same fourteen-year period progressively more of the medical service of migrants to Windsor was supplied by Hartford rather than Windsor (Figure 4). The same was true of banking service, drug service, laundry service, movies, parties, dances, and other amusements. Only in groceries, and to some extent other minor services, did the town of Windsor seem to compete successfully with the city of Hartford. Similar trends are suggested by a limited amount of research in other suburban parts of Connecticut.

We do not wish either to praise or to condemn such changes in the functioning of the socio-economic institutions of our suburbs. Rather, we urge that we should do much research and much counseling together in order to understand why such changes take place, and the values of such changes to the big city, to suburbia, and to the open country. Social organizers all along the line may discover that they will have to provide "new bottles for such new wine." On the whole, we may discover that such inevitable changes as we have

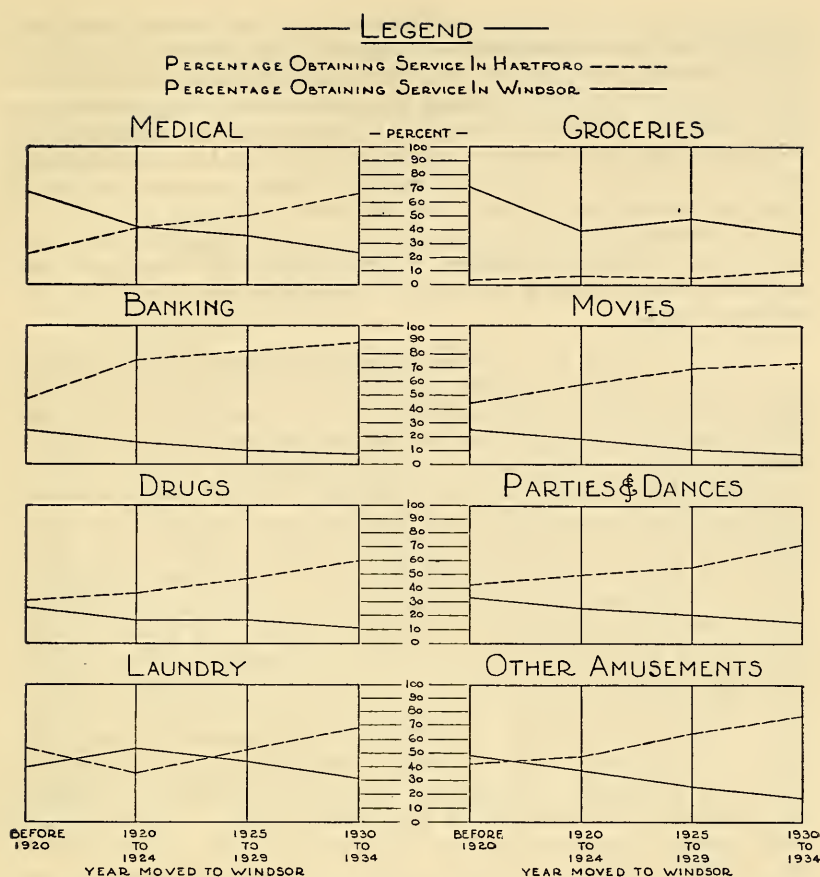


Figure 4: Trends in the sources of the socio-economic services, by date of arrival, of householders moving to Windsor from Hartford and at present employed in Hartford.

partially described in the structure and functions of local communities and their institutions, have the promise of better things for the future. Nostalgia for the things that used to be, and fixed ideas in social organization, need especially to be challenged in this situation. The same, perhaps, may be said of new ideas, for the age of an idea or a practice has little to do with its usefulness in a dynamic society. It is truth, alone, that shall set us free.

3. REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR RURAL AREAS

How can rural areas seriously lacking in population and economic adequacy meet their institutional responsibilities? Of course, in Connecticut, the state provides economic support for a minimum

school term in such sparsely-settled localities; and further, state law provides for the establishment of regional high schools. Is it desirable for ecclesiastical bodies in such sparsely-settled areas to effect a consolidation of effort through the larger parish organization or other device? And is it possible to eliminate the administrative boundary lines that separate sparsely-settled rural towns so as to work for economy in local government? These questions cannot be dismissed with a mere shrug of the shoulder, for aside from the ultimate solution of these major problems we must deal with the more difficult and immediate problem of putting aside the false pride and prejudice which stand in the way of assembling and evaluating the pertinent facts.

Let us consider for a moment the regional rural high school, as provided by a recent act of the legislature. It is logically argued that regional high schools will provide sparsely-settled rural areas equality of educational opportunity with better advantaged areas. But is equality, *per se*, in the sense of identical programs, a virtue? Even if regional high schools do make possible a fuller program of the usual academic studies and other developmental activities for rural students, do such advantages really help young people to live better lives than they would otherwise live, and to do better the things that society normally expects of them? The Scandinavian countries have answered this question by the inauguration of a system of folk high schools adapted to the needs of their respective localities. These folk high schools are in no sense a replica of the regular academic high schools. Of course the test of better living is difficult to make, but its results are the only true answer to the question of rural high school consolidation. On the other hand, unless some corrective provisions are made, consolidation of schools may tend to decrease the interest of rural people in their local affairs. A recent study made by the Department of Rural Sociology of a big western university indicates rather clearly that certain community interests, and especially marketing, seemed to follow their young boys and girls to the villages or cities where their educational interests are consolidated.

While we do not wish to seem alarmist, we must point out the danger of weakening interest in the local rural communities through the overzealous and untested consolidation of their institutions in urban and suburban centers. There is always the danger of throwing the baby out with the bath. Just what does the regional high school do to its remote neighborhoods that is beneficial or hurtful? What does the larger-parish form of church organization do for the people of the open country? What happens in the open country when the doctor of horse-and-buggy fame moves to town to become a specialist? How do we know? What of it?

Of course, there may be compensations for such apparent losses. Extension education of various sorts, recreational activities for various age-groups, and welfare programs can and should be provided for remote rural communities by centralized social agencies. The challenge is, what really new and valid opportunities for service to

the open country does the consolidation of schools, or churches, or other institutions provide? Those who advocate such consolidation should face these questions constructively, in a spirit of humility. The answer should be based upon long-term, as well as immediate objectives, and should encompass the entire highway of community life leading down from the great cities, through suburbia, to the remote open country.

4. IMPERSONALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

If rural boys and girls are to be educated outside of their immediate communities, and if the schools and other consolidated institutions in the more strictly suburban sections are not fully mindful of their new opportunities and are not adequately prepared to meet these opportunities, then what may we expect in the area of human relations? We do not have to assume that these questions must be answered in a pessimistic manner; but we must beware of certain dangers. One of these dangers is the growth of impersonality in human relations. To be friendly and sympathetic, people must really know one another, and that implies a certain amount of contact and cooperation in the ordinary affairs of daily life. It means a constant search for the answer to the Biblical question: "And who is my neighbour" (Luke 10:29)? The late Will Rogers is quoted as saying that he found it difficult to hate anyone whom he knew very well. Research and observation show that it is possible for rural neighbors, as well as city dwellers, to be in the same locality physically, but miles apart so far as friendly interest in each other's welfare is concerned. We may contrast this situation with the traditional simple community where everyone knows everyone else — both his faults and his virtues — and where there is always ready help in time of need.

Now impersonality in human relationships is not inevitable. Neither rural nor suburban areas are compelled to ignore those activities that lead to understanding and cooperation. And rural leaders do not have to wait for some distant federal or state agency or bureau to come down into the local communities to solve their welfare problems for them. Any rural or suburban community that finds itself drifting into the desert of impersonal relationships can soon establish an oasis through taking thought of its conditions and organizing for certain simple social activities, especially activities closely related to public safety and social welfare among neighbors. We wish to challenge particularly the regional high school for leadership in this sort of thing; and likewise the rural church, the extension force of the University, and other agencies.

5. ZONING

The suburban movement, as we have already indicated, can result in a hodge-podge accumulation of people with varying interests and conditions of life. But a number of suburban towns of Connecticut, sensing the danger, are finding ways to arrest or avert this

trend. Their method of approach is zoning. Windsor has voted itself into the metropolitan area of Hartford for the enjoyment of certain public utilities. But Windsor has gone further: it has actually zoned the entire town — villages, farms, and all — into three areas. The regulations cover the use of real estate, the distance of houses from the highway, the height of houses, and other matters of sanitation, safety, beauty and convenience. Thus rural and suburban zoning has implications that reach far beyond the economic value of real estate; it also includes values of the spirit and the mind implicit in social welfare and gracious living. A number of other Connecticut towns have adopted zoning, and we prophesy that with the further influx of urban people to these localities for residence and recreation, zoning will become, more and more, an important problem.

6. SOCIAL CONFLICT

The shifting of population in the suburban movement inevitably results in some social conflict. This conflict takes many forms, and varies in accent from locality to locality. Sometimes it is in the area of leadership. While not all urban people who move to suburban areas participate actively in community affairs, many of them do and, as men and women of leadership ability, soon make their presence felt. Sometimes this means a division of opinion upon civic problems such as zoning, the improvement of roads, the improvement of local schools, or provisions for recreation. A number of instances have come to our attention where the newcomers were finally able to outvote the older local citizens and thus retire some local patriarchs from long tenures as first selectmen, or town clerks, or other offices. Yet, often we find the newcomers and the older citizens joining happily in planning a better social order.

The rise of real estate values which usually accompanies the influx of migrants to a rural or suburban community is apt to cause certain frictions. The newcomer is inclined to purchase his residence or place of business and, if such purchases become frequent, the price of real estate is sure to rise. This movement, if extended far, makes the investment value of farm land too great to return a fair profit to the owner and operator. Thus many farmers who find that they can sell their land for residential and recreational uses for several times its value as farm land, have given up active farming entirely.

But pertinent to our consideration of conflict patterns, we often find that the assessor and the tax collector have discovered this new trend in real estate values and have made the ownership of land a growing burden to the populace. Added to this situation, we find that people of urban origin generally demand better public utilities and better institutions than formerly existed in their new home communities. The satisfaction of these demands nearly always means a rise in taxation, and a rise in tax rates is usually unwelcome to the older residents.

Difference in the evaluation of the historical and cultural backgrounds of these New England communities may cause further friction. Often the newcomer erects new buildings or institutes economic or cultural activities that seem out of harmony with the quiet and more or less austere dignity traditional in many rural New England areas. In many instances, of course, the newcomers are really returning members of old New England families who have come back home to restore ancestral properties and to settle down. Sometimes they are joined by non-New Englanders who have caught the charm of these localities. But a certain amount of friction under such conditions is, perhaps, the normal resultant of growth, — the result of "putting new wine into old bottles."

7. THE USE OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Another problem that emerges in this suburban movement, and that has been accentuated by war conditions, is the use of the available human resources, and particularly of local leadership. The population of suburban New England — by which we mean primarily the three southern states of this region — is a mixed population that has come from almost every corner of the globe. Many of these people have come in fairly recent years; but of course, in a sense, all of us are immigrants. The sociologist knows that one of the prerequisites for cultural growth is cultural diversity. A people that becomes stationary in residence, in folkways and mores, and in racial stock and cultural outlook, generally becomes stagnant. We have but to turn the searchlight upon India and China to prove the point. But because of heterogeneity of national origins here in Connecticut, we have migrants who have brought with them their music and art, their literary genius, economic effectiveness, love of land, ability in industrial organization, and many other abilities and virtues that go to make America one of the most versatile and powerful nations in history.

Why, in this seedbed of freedom and in this situation of great possibility, should we not, in our rural and suburban communities, recognize the goodly heritage that has been gleaned from every land? It is not an accident that in this larger New York metropolitan area we have as citizens, or as favored long-termed guests, men of world-wide renown. Why should not our rural and suburban communities, then, go out of their way not only to welcome these people as citizens, but to invite their leadership in developing in their communities things of the mind and the spirit?

8. OTHER PROBLEMS

If space permitted, we could continue the listing and description of problems that in one way or another are a part of, or are related to, the suburban movement. These would include assisting worthy families who desire to farm, or to live upon the land in rural areas, to get suitably located. This is a special challenge to the Farm

Bureau and County Agent, the rural minister and others who are looking forward to the establishment of a fortunate rural social order.

We could also list the problem of lessening or eliminating theological lines that separate neighborhoods into competitive and un-economic sectarian bodies. We welcome all efforts toward establishing comity among the existing religious bodies, and especially the co-operation and unification of these bodies into an intelligent and co-operative religious force.

We would also mention the special challenge of making adequate provisions for the returning soldier. The men who have struggled for the cause of freedom in this present world war will expect to find the spirit of freedom, opportunity, and brotherhood at home. How may we, as serious-minded citizens, meet such issues? Economic opportunity, of course, is implied; and so are other provisions contained in the spirit and the letter of the G. I. Bill of Rights.

The opportunity of minority groups to attain their privileges under our form of government must be safeguarded. And for all citizens there is the perennial problem of attaining the things of the mind and the spirit which constitute our precious heritage. Patriotism and candor demand that every responsible citizen should shoulder the duties connected with the enjoyment of these opportunities and privileges.

Finally, we might turn the searchlight of critical inquiry upon the programs and the leadership of all our local institutions—urban, suburban, and rural. It is so easy to fall into the rut of desiccated formalities, and so difficult to understand what society really demands of us, and to have the faith and the courage and the intelligence to measure up to what is demanded of us. I lay this challenge especially upon programs for the selection and training of clergymen, teachers, social workers and others, who, by profession, presume to lead our social order.

We would not wish to close these remarks in a tone of pessimism. In describing social problems we are not necessarily alluding to pathological situations, but we are setting forth challenges for clearer perception and an intelligent mobilization of ideas and efforts. However, we need to have our pathways marked out a little more clearly, perhaps, in certain of these problem areas. While there are many who have the insight through experience and learning to point the way, yet most of us, both professional leaders and laity, need the guidance of research. Often facts — bare, objective, uncomfortable facts — are needed as a base line for the formulation of policies and the development of programs. Thus in our interesting social order, the statisticians and the researchers are needed, perhaps, as much as the prophets; but both are needed. So, let us, with humility, look to both the scientist and the prophet, for both have something of value to give us toward a better understanding of our interesting and goodly heritage here in the suburban area of southern New England.



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